3 1761 04569873 5

The Mutiny

of the

Bengal Army.

An Historical Narrative.

BY ONE WHO HAS SERVED UNDE
SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

DS
478
.3
M8
1857
c.1
ROBA

LONDON:
RTH AND HARRISON, 215 REGENT
MDCCCLVII.

Price One Shilling.

THE MUTINY

OF

THE BENGAL ARMY.

An Historical Narrative.

BY ONE WHO HAS SERVED UNDER
SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

LONDON:
BOSWORTH AND HARRISON, 215 REGENT STREET.
MDCCCLVII.

TO

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD—

THE LIVING EARL OF ELLENBOROUGH

AND

THE DEAD SIR CHARLES NAPIER,

WHO BOTH KNEW

HOW TO CHECK A MUTINY,

TO SELECT EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVANTS,

AND TO GAIN THE AFFECTIONS OF THOSE OVER WHOM THEIR

SWAY EXTENDED,

These Pages are Dedicated.

INTRODUCTION.

I PURPOSE to write an historical narrative of the rise, progress, and termination of the mutiny and revolt of the Bengal Army. It will be my object to expose, in the first instance, the causes of the disaffection, to state then the consequences to which that disaffection led, and to conclude by pointing out the remedies which ought to be adopted to ensure the country against a repetition of the fearful outrages that have disgraced it. As my object is simply to present to my countrymen in England a true account of this awful disaster, and of all the causes which, either directly or indirectly, have led to it, I shall be deterred by no feeling of favour or affection for any individual from speaking out as the occasion demands, awarding praise where praise has been earned, but not shrinking from denouncing those whose conduct has at all contributed to the rise and progress of the mutiny.

It will, I think, be advisable in the first instance, for the benefit of non-professional readers, to present a slight sketch of the organisation and interior economy of a Bengal Infantry Regiment, more especially as on the maintenance or entire abrogation of the existing system the future discipline and efficiency of the army will depend.

Organisation of a Bengal Regiment.—A Regiment of Infantry on the Bengal Establishment is composed of 1000 privates, 120 non-commissioned officers, and 20 native commissioned officers. It is divided into ten companies, each containing 100 privates, 2 native commissioned, and 12 non-commissioned, officers. The regiment is never quartered in barracks, but in lines—such lines consisting of ten rows of thatched huts—one being apportioned to each company. In front of each of these rows is a small circular building, in which the arms and accoutrements are stored, after having been cleaned, and the key of which is generally in the possession of the havildar (sergeant) on duty. Promotion invariably goes by seniority, and the commanding officer of a regiment has no power to pass over any man, without representing the fact to the Commander-in-Chief. A Sepoy, then, who may enter the service at the age of 16, cannot count on finding himself a naick (corporal) before he attains the age of 36, a sergeant (havildar) at 45, a jemadar (native lieutenant) at

54, and a subahdar (native captain) at 60.* By the time he has attained the age of 50, a native may generally be considered as utterly useless. The blood in his veins and the marrow in his bones have been dried up or wasted by constant exposure to the trying climate of India; his energies are relaxed, his memory impaired, and in governing and controlling the men who are especially under his surveillance in the lines, he can be of but little use to his European superior.

Caste.—But there is a principle at work, unknown to the European soldiers, which operates with tremendous force on the mind of the native, and either essentially adds to, or vitally detracts from, the authority of the native officer. This principle is *caste*. Now the predominating race in a Bengal regiment is the Hindoo; the followers of that religion, as a general rule, being to the Mahomedans in the proportion of five to one. A regiment, a thousand strong, will therefore be found to contain about eight hundred Hindoos. Of these it often happens that more than four hundred are Brahmins or priests, about two hundred Rajpoots (a high caste, but lower than the Brahminical order), and the rest of a lower caste.

The Brahmins are the most influential, as they are the most bigoted of the whole race of Hindoos. In their mythological tales the gods themselves are constantly made to do penance and propitiation to this superior order. As these tales form the only kind of literature circulated amongst the Hindoos, and as the acts they record, however absurd they may appear to the educated, are implicitly believed, it is not to be wondered at that the Brahmins are the objects of veneration to the other castes. "The feet of a holy man are like the waters of life," is a proverb which gains implicit credence from all classes, and is at the same time practically acted upon. His curse is dreaded as a fate worse than death itself, whilst his protection is earnestly sought after by means of small presents, and of what to them is more valuable, constant prostrations or salaams publicly performed, so as to show the world the extent of the belief in their mighty power. When it is considered that in each regiment of the Bengal Army there are several of these men, in many regiments from three to four hundred, the mighty influence they have in their power to exert for good or evil may be imagined.

The manner in which this influence can be brought to bear on the discipline of a regiment may be easily conceived. We will suppose that one company is composed of 20 Mahomedans, 40 Brahmins, and 40 Rajpoots and lower-caste Hindoos. The influence of the Brahmins over the 80 Hindoos is paramount, and the Mahomedans being a small minority, would not contest the palm with them. The whole company may, therefore, be said to be under Brahminical influence.

* These are the extreme ages. In the regiments engaged in the Affghanistan, Sutlej, and Punjab campaigns, promotion has been attained at much earlier ages than are here set down.

If a low-caste Hindoo happened at the time to fill the responsible post of subahdar, he would be entirely under the spiritual guiding of the Brahminical clique. Were a mutiny hatching in the lines, he would not dare to divulge it, from the fear of a penalty more dreadful even than death — excommunication.

It is very evident, therefore, that by means of this pernicious system of caste, the men of a Bengal regiment, though nominally subject to the British Crown, are really under the orders and control of a Brahminical clique, formed in each regiment, constantly corresponding with one another, and acting without any sense of responsibility whatever.

European Officers.—Hitherto it has been supposed that the example of, and association with their European officers, have done more than anything else to loosen the power of caste. And it has undoubtedly been proved that on many trying occasions, especially during the Affghanistan war, when the Sepoys were exposed to more than ordinary trials, these men, generally so tenacious, have forgotten their prejudices, and have infringed many of their strictest precepts. It was in Affghanistan that the Sepoy earned the character given of him by Major D'Arcey Todd, of Herat renown, that "he would go anywhere, and do anything, if led by an officer in whom he had confidence." He earned and deserved that character in that rude country. Removed from the influences which hourly thrust themselves upon him in India, he was in Affghanistan a different and a far more useful being; but the moment he returned, he indued his prejudices at once, and became again the bigoted, relentless Brahmin. Still, even upon him then, the example of his officer had a certain influence. That is to say, he was prompt to recognise a daring, chivalrous nature, and to pay a sort of homage, not unmixed with fear, to high intellectual powers. Where an officer was at all lax in the performance of his duty, the Sepoy was certain to be lax also; and in cases where a stern strictness was unaccompanied by an occasional warmth, a good word off duty, or an inclination to patronise their sports, the officer was obeyed, but uncared for. Twenty-six officers make up the complement of a native regiment, but of these nearly half were generally absent, and there were seldom more than fifteen present at head-quarters. For the management of a regiment under Brahminical control, as all Bengal regiments are, this number is amply sufficient in times of peace. That is to say, the management is not affected by the mere number. In fact, the conduct of Irregular regiments, which possess only three officers, has always contrasted so favourably with that of Line regiments, with their fourteen or fifteen, that the natural conclusion one would arrive at is, that the latter are over-officered.

The officers live in bungalows, or thatched houses, near the lines of their regiments, but too far off to enable them to have any direct control over the movements of their men during the day; and for eight months of the year at least, the weather is too warm to allow them to ride out, except in the morning and evening. In order, however, to have the whole regiment under constant European supervision, two

sergeants are allowed to each corps, who are required to live in the lines, and to report all that goes on daily to the Adjutant.

Duties of Officers.—The duties of the officers are very similar to those performed in an English regiment. There is a Commander, generally of the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, who commands the regiment; an Adjutant, who superintends the drill, and makes daily reports to the commanding officer; an Interpreter and Quarter-Master, whose duty it is to look after the clothing of the men, and to interpret all orders: then each company is assigned to a separate officer, who is expected to settle all matters connected with his men every morning; or, should he be unable to do so, to refer them to the commanding officer.

Powers of the Commanding Officer.—The power of a commanding officer is of a very limited nature: he can make no promotions to the grade of commissioned officer; even in the ordinary rise from Sepoy to naick, should he think fit to pass over a man, his decision is liable to be upset by the Commander-in-Chief: he can make no prompt recognition of distinguished services; and, worse than all, by a recent order of Sir W. Gomm, he cannot refuse a court-martial to any Sepoy who may choose to demand it, in preference to the punishment which may have been awarded to him. The commanding officer is therefore quite powerless, and the men know it. Once it was otherwise: there was a time when the Commandant had it in his power to punish or reward, and his decision was irrevocable. But the system has been gradually changed. Commanders-in-Chief fresh from Europe, and accustomed all their lives to command Englishmen, have forgotten the inherent distinction between the European and the Asiatic, and in endeavouring to assimilate the rules for the latter to those which are suited only to the former, have broken down one of the chief barriers to Brahminical supremacy. One consequence of the present system is the gradual decline and final loss of all regard on the part of the men for their officers. As members of a Christian and converting religion they are disliked, as superiors they are no longer feared. Personal qualities may attract a short-lived admiration, but even that would shiver to atoms in the encounter with Hindoo fanaticism.

The Pension List.—But there was one resource upon which the Government relied above all others to influence their Sepoys, and this was by making it their interest to remain faithful to the British standard. The establishment of a pension list on a large and liberal scale, by the operation of which a fixed monthly stipend was secured to any soldier who might be incapacitated for further duty after a service of fifteen years, and which, moreover, provided for the heirs or nearest of kin of those who might perish in the field of battle, or from sickness whilst on foreign service, seemed well adapted to secure this end. A nobler or more liberal institution than the pension establishment for native soldiers does not exist, and it was thought by those competent to judge, that the estimation of the benefits accruing from it was fixed so firmly in the minds of the Sepoys, that that single consideration would weigh against all tempta-

tions to mutiny or revolt. The result has shown that Hindoo fanaticism, when fairly pitted against the enjoyment of present comfort, the certain prospect of rank and wealth, a sure provision for one's family, a reputation for loyalty of one hundred years' standing, will invariably carry the day in a regiment where Brahminical influence is paramount, and where the European officers do not possess absolute authority.

Yet such had been the condition of the Bengal Army for several years before the outbreak of the mutiny of which I am about to treat. The slumbering feeling first showed itself of late years during the rule of Lord Ellenborough, but the prompt and vigorous measures of that nobleman so completely repressed it, that for six years no similar symptom was anywhere apparent. A second time it rose in a still more dangerous force, and attempted to coerce the iron will of Sir Charles Napier. That gallant veteran extinguished it ere yet the spark had smouldered into a flame, and was rebuked by Lord Dalhousie for so doing. He retired, to avoid witnessing with his hands tied the catastrophe which he foresaw. A third time, in 1852, the prejudices of the Sepoys were placed in opposition to the will of Government. Lord Dalhousie requested the 38th Regiment to proceed to Burma. They refused. Lord Dalhousie succumbed. From that moment a revolt became a mere question of time and opportunity.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MANIFESTATIONS OF REVOLT.

During the year 1854, the 38th Regiment Native Infantry, unpunished for their refusal to go to Burma, were located at the station of Cawnpore; there were two other regiments at the same station, the 63rd and 74th Native Infantry. At Lucknow, distant about fifty miles, were the 19th and 34th Regiments; at Allygurh, on the high road between Cawnpore and Meerut, was the 54th Regiment, which also supplied troops to the small civil stations of Etawah, Mynpoorie, and Bolundshuhr, the two former in the vicinity of Cawnpore and Agra, the latter close to Meerut. At Allahabad, about 125 miles from Cawnpore, the 11th and 48th Regiments were stationed. The native troops at Meerut consisted of the 3rd Cavalry, and the 36th and 46th Regiments. Considering the joint share which many of the regiments thus enumerated had in the late outbreak, it is reasonable to suppose that constant communications were going on between them all. No suspicion of it existed at the time in any quarter. Our native troops were as much trusted as Europeans; it was believed that they were not only completely satisfied, but that they regarded service in our ranks as preferable to any other mode of obtaining a livelihood. And certainly the authorities had grounds for this belief. No sound of disaffection was heard in any quarter. For every vacancy in the ranks there were more candidates than could possibly be enrolled, and the tone and bearing of the Sepoys towards their officers left nothing to be desired in that respect.

The relation of the Sepoys to the Province of Oudh.—An event, however, was about to occur, which, in the opinion of officers who had served long in India, would put to the severest test the feelings of the native soldiery towards their foreign masters. Of all the considerable native states with which we had come in contact, the province of Oudh was the only one which had maintained its independence intact. Immediately contiguous to our own possessions, inhabited by a mixed population of Hindoos and Mahomedans, from which our own army was principally recruited, the kingdom of Oudh had remained for upwards of half a century firm in its alliance to the British Government. During the height of our reverses in Affghanistan, that friendship had never wavered. So firm indeed was the attachment to, or the perception of the power of British arms, that

the Kings of Oudh had more than once, in the season of our distress, accommodated our Government with loans to a considerable amount, in repayment of which we, to our shame be it said, compelled them to receive accessions of territory alike useless to both parties. We were therefore under considerable obligations to the Court of Lucknow. Undoubtedly, the Kings of Oudh regarded us in the light of a protecting rather than an absorbing power. It had been their policy for years and years to give in to every demand of the British Government, and to avoid every act which, directly or indirectly, might give a claim for interference in their internal affairs. To this end the suggestion of the Resident, whom, backed by three native regiments, we maintained at the Court of Lucknow, was always considered as law, and the intrigues for his favour amongst the candidates for places in the king's council were carried on in a manner which those who have visited Constantinople may perhaps understand.

The King of Oudh, then, believed himself secure from further interference than that which I have just related, and it was generally believed, amongst the civil and military community of India, that the Government had no serious intention of annexing any portion of his country. There seemed indeed, in a political view, to be strong objections to such a course. The King of Oudh was the sole remaining independent Mahomedan sovereign in India; as such he commanded the veneration and regard of all the members of the Mussulman persuasion. To strike him down, then, would excite a general feeling of discontent amongst a very numerous and powerful class of our subjects—men of whom the Cavalry regiments were chiefly composed, and who supplied at least two hundred bayonets to each regiment of Native Infantry. From his territories, indeed, our army was almost entirely recruited. The Hindoo and Mahomedan Sepoy alike came from Oudh; he transmitted all his savings to his relatives in that country; and it is a remarkable fact, and one that fully refutes Lord Dalhousie's assertions about the mis-government of Oudh, that not a single instance has been known of a Sepoy settling down after the completion of his service in our provinces: he has invariably proceeded to Oudh, to invest his little fortune in land. Colonel Sleeman, for many years our agent at the Court of Lucknow, and one of the ablest men who ever held that appointment, was so well aware of this fact, that he lost no opportunity of impressing upon Government his conviction that the annexation of Oudh would produce disaffection in the native army, principally because it would transfer the family of the Sepoy from the operation of the regal regulations and justice of the King of Oudh to our own civil courts.

But Colonel Sleeman died, and Sir James Outram reigned in his stead. New councillors, aware of Lord Dalhousie's mania for annexation, succeeded the tried statesmen who had hitherto so successfully administered the affairs of our empire on a contrary principle, and in an evil hour Lord Dalhousie decided upon seizing Oudh. He resolved to do it, too, in a manner the most offensive, and the most irritating to the large Mahomedan population of India, and the most prejudicial to our own character for truth and honour. He

secretly collected troops, entered the kingdom of Oudh like a thief in the night, marched the British force directly upon Lucknow, and then, with the capital of Oudh virtually in his own hands, gave the first intimation to the King of his impending fate. Wajid Ali, of course, was unable to resist, and Oudh became from that moment a province of the British Empire.

It is impossible to describe the mixed feelings of indignation and hatred which pervaded the whole Mussulman population of India when they heard of this deed. Naturally treacherous themselves, they yet had an instinctive admiration for honest and truthful dealing, and they had hitherto placed implicit confidence in the word of an Englishman. When, however, they learned the story of the annexation, the juggle by which the King of Oudh had been done out of his dominions, their hearts filled with rage and a desire for revenge. Our Mahomedan Sepoys were by that act alienated at once and for ever, and the Hindoos began to reflect that the kingly power which could condescend to trick a king out of his dominions, might by a similar manœuvre cheat them out of their religion.

Such were the consequences of Lord Dalhousie's last act. He had first, in the instance of the 38th Native Infantry at Barrackpore, in 1852, sown the seed of revolt by provoking a mutiny and failing to check it. He followed this up in the early part of 1856 by the perpetration of a dark deed, calculated to raise a spirit of disaffection, dislike, and distrust throughout the native army of India, and the fruits of which I am now about to record. He did all this, I may add, in spite of, and in direct contrariety to, the warning voice of the great man whom his paltry littleness and petty jealousy had driven from the country.

Lord Dalhousie left India in the early part of 1856. So utterly ignorant was he of the real feeling of the native army, and of the effect of his ill-judged measures, that he left upon record his opinion that their position could not be improved. And yet he himself had done a great deal to affect that position most injuriously. Before Lord Dalhousie's time, the roads were free to man and beast; that nobleman imposed a tax upon all travellers. Previous to his arrival in India, a Sepoy's letters were allowed to travel free of postage all over India; under Lord Dalhousie's administration he was subjected to the same charge as his officer. These imposts were small in themselves, but they greatly restricted freedom, and told upon the pocket of the man who received only fourteen shillings monthly, with which to support his family hundreds of miles distant, and to provide himself with food and all the necessaries of life.

Lord Dalhousie left India in March 1856. It might have been supposed that the feelings of the native Indian community would have been relieved sensibly by his absence. And so, undoubtedly, they were for the moment. But it was soon found that, although he himself had quitted the country, he had left his counsellors and satellites behind him. It is a matter of necessity for a newly-arrived Governor-General, ignorant of the machinery and working of the Indian Government, to continue in office, for a time at least, the

officials whom he may find installed in the several departments. Lord Canning has, therefore, been compelled since his arrival to work with Lord Dalhousie's tools. He has since, it is reported, found out their utter inefficiency. As it is important for the right understanding of my narrative that the characters and habits of thought of these men should be known and appreciated, I do not think I can do better than present in this place a sketch of each individual member of Government, for the benefit of the reader.

Characters of the Members of the Government of India on Lord Canning's arrival.—The Supreme Council of India is composed of four members, in concert with whom the Governor-General administers the affairs of the country. At the time of Lord Canning's assumption of office these members consisted of Mr. Dorin and Mr. J. P. Grant, members of the Civil Service, General Low of the Madras Army, and Mr. Peacock of the English Bar.

There were four Secretaries to Government: Mr. Lushington for the Financial, Mr. Beadon for the Home, Colonel Birch for the Military, and Mr. Edmonstone for the Foreign Department. It will suffice for the purposes of my narrative to describe the Members of Council and the Military and Home Secretaries.

Mr. Dorin.—Mr. Dorin was a man who, in a service of thirty-three years, had never been fifty miles out of Calcutta in the direction of the interior: he was, therefore, practically ignorant of the manners, and customs, and peculiar requirements of the people of India. For all practical purposes, those three-and-thirty years might as well, or even with more advantage, have been spent in England. He was verging upon sixty years of age, and in all his habits was a very Sybarite. His experience of ruling had been principally confined to the Financial Department; but even there his budgets bore a stronger resemblance in their results to those of Sir Charles Wood, than to the more perfect calculations of Sir R. Peel or Mr. Gladstone. In 1854, during Lord Dalhousie's absence in the Neelghery Hills, he had temporarily assumed the Presidency of the Council. His tenure of that office was chiefly remarkable for the outbreak of the Southal rebellion, and for the weak and inefficient measures pursued to check it. He was indolent, void of energy, deficient in mental culture and ability, and certainly, in no other country but India, and in no other service but the Civil Service, would have attained any but the most subordinate position.

Mr. J. P. Grant.—Mr. Grant was a very different character. In the prime of life, active, energetic, and possessed of a certain amount of ability, he might, had he been trained in any other school, have done good service on the occurrence of a crisis. Unfortunately, he laboured under a complete ignorance of the habits and customs of the natives of Upper India. Accustomed, during his service, to deal only with Bengalees, he had imbibed the extraordinary notion that they were a type of the Hindostanees generally. His vanity was so great, that he would not stoop to demand information even from practical men of his own service. With the supercilious manner which is so often the accompaniment of a confined understanding, he pooh-

pooh'd every suggestion which was at variance with his settled ideas. Of the Sepoys he had no knowledge whatever, although, with respect to them, he was always ready to offer a suggestion. Of military men in general he had a jealous dislike, which prompted him on every occasion to oppose any plans or suggestions offered by a member of that profession. He was an adept at intrigue, and, being possessed of a practical knowledge of revenue matters, a plausible manner, an easy address, and considerable influence at the India House, he had gained a seat in council at an earlier age than was customary. As a practical man he had always been a failure. It was his advice, given because Mr. Halliday proposed an opposite plan, which delayed for seven or eight months the proclamation of martial law in the Southal districts; and it will be seen, that on the occasion of the mutiny at Barrackpore, his pernicious influence was always opposed to those prompt and severe measures, on the execution of which the safety of the empire depended. These faults are attributable to the evil action of the school in which he was trained, on a disposition naturally haughty and supercilious. Had he never been a civilian, had he been trained to depend on his own exertions from the moment of his entrance into life, his career would have been more useful to his country and more honourable to himself.

General Low. — General Low was the only really practical member of the council. Unfortunately he was the oldest, and age and climate had already begun to tell upon his nerves. Nevertheless, he was the only man from whom the Governor-General received any real assistance. He knew, at all events, that there ought to be no trifling with mutiny, and he advised accordingly. It is to be lamented that he was wanting in the eloquence or power of language necessary to support his views. He could record a minute, but could not make a speech. And it thus happened that he was unable to defend measures, of the propriety of which he was convinced, against the legal subtleties sometimes brought to bear on them by his colleagues.

Mr. Peacock.—Mr. Peacock was the Law member of council, and as such was not expected to be able to deal with purely military questions. When such matters were debated he generally vacillated between Mr. Grant and General Low, inclining oftener to the civilian. His intentions were always pure, and when convinced of the justice of a cause, no special pleading would alter his vote. Unfortunately, his unacquaintance with soldiers prevented him from comprehending the dangers of unchecked mutiny, and he was found, on trial, ignorant of the proper moment to disregard rule and to resort to urgent measures.

Colonel Birch.—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department was a man in every way unsuited for his position. Placed early in his career in the department of the Judge-Advocate-General, his confined understanding was exerted in mastering the quirks and quibbles of the law. His intellect being essentially shallow, he was unable to take a broad view of any question; but he would argue for hours, and exhaust all his ingenuity in com-

bating some petty detail. When Sir Charles Napier assumed the command of the Indian Army, Col. Birch was Judge-Advocate. He was rather afraid of Sir Charles's downright character, and at their first interview exerted all his powers to please him. No amount of special pleading, however, would go down with the great Conqueror of Scinde.

Sir Charles's bad opinion was, however, of this service to Colonel Birch, that it obtained for him Lord Dalhousie's patronage. That nobleman, eager to show his spite towards Sir C. Napier, took the opportunity of the first vacancy to appoint Colonel Birch Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department; thus placing him, *de facto*, at the head of the army in India—giving him a position, indeed, exactly analogous to that of the Minister of War in France.

A worse appointment could not have been made. Colonel Birch was essentially a sycophant, always ready to give up his own opinion, if by so doing he could curry favour with his superior. He had tried this plan with Sir C. Napier, but Sir Charles found him out, and not only felt, but showed contempt towards him in consequence; he found it an easier task to ingratiate himself with Lord Dalhousie and his successor.

But he was also an ignoramus. He knew nothing of the Bengal Army. Many years had elapsed since he had even spoken to a Sepoy. He was ignorant of the composition of the army, as well as of its wants; whilst his previous training had so unfitted him for his post, that he could not even write an order without making it unintelligible by excessive quibbling.

Mr. Beadon.—Of Mr. Beadon, the Home Secretary, it will suffice to say that his great idea of policy, the one scheme which he kept constantly before him, was "India for the Civil Service." He looked, in fact, upon the country as the property of the members of the service, and he legislated accordingly. Indigo planters, merchants, in fact all Europeans who were not civilians or soldiers, were discouraged by him. He hated independent Englishmen; he hated the Press, because its motto was "India for the English:" he hated every one and every thing which interfered with his grand idea, and he never lost an opportunity of showing that hatred. Under his rule, India would have remained in our hands what it has been for the last hundred years: its resources would never have been developed, it would have continued almost like a burden on England; but as a compensation, it would have produced annually a certain sum of money as salaries for the family clique who governed the country.

Mr. Beadon had one recommendation: if he was narrow-minded and unscrupulous, he was honest: he could not "smile and smile and be a villain:" he spoke his thoughts freely and honestly, and people whilst they hated, could not help respecting him—a sentiment never entertained towards his colleague in the military department.

Lord Canning.—Such were the men by whom Lord Canning was surrounded on the outbreak of the mutiny. If they were, as a body, vain, ignorant, and incompetent, truth compels me to record that they could not have found a softer soil on which to exercise their

talents than that imbedded in the nature of the Governor-General. He was a man of excellent disposition, but weak and vacillating to a degree scarcely to be imagined. It was his great misfortune to be the son of an illustrious man. Qualities were therefore expected from him which he certainly did not inherit from his sire. His abilities were essentially mediocre, and, like many weak men, he almost invariably submitted his intellect to the influence of the last counsellor who had his ear.

He possessed, however, many agreeable qualities, calculated to adorn a private station. His personal courage was undeniable, but he lacked firmness and self-reliance to a degree which quite incapacitated him for his high position. Had he been surrounded by men possessing honesty and ability, he would doubtless have taken his tone from them, and under their advice and tuition would have shown himself equal to the occasion. But the slave of intriguing and incompetent advisers, the shuttlecock of Messrs. Grant, Beadon, and Birch, he gave, as I shall now proceed to show, an impetus to a mutiny which might have been crushed in the bud.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE OUTBREAK OF THE DISAFFECTION TO THE DISBANDING OF THE 19TH NATIVE INFANTRY.

The King of Oudh having been, as before stated, summarily deprived of his kingdom, determined to appeal to the Parliament and people of England for redress. Accordingly, in the month of April 1856, he came down to Calcutta, and took up his abode at Garden Reach, in the outskirts of Calcutta, attended by his prime minister, Ally Nucky Khan, and several followers. The Queen-mother, his brother, and one of his sons, proceeded to England, in the month of May following, in order effectually to prosecute the schemes on which he had resolved for the recovery of his kingdom. They set out, in fact, not with any hope on their part, or on the part of the King and his advisers, that their mission would be successful, but in order to convey to the people of England the impression that he had no hope but in their justice and mercy, in order to remove attention from the vast design he had formed—to upset at one blow the British rule in India.

In fact, this plan was decided upon before the King* left Luck-

* It should be borne in mind that the expression, "King of Oudh," refers here to those who carried on intrigues in his name. It is probable that the king himself, an imbecile, was not trusted with the full extent of the conspiracy; but his prime minister, Ally Nucky Khan, without doubt a man of transcendant ability, was the soul of the plot. Since his confinement in Fort William he has, in private conversation, attempted to justify himself, by declaring it was a counter-stroke for the treachery by which the seizure of Oudh was consummated.

now. He had become aware, from the reports of his agents, that the Bengal Army was disaffected, and ripe to be worked upon. The Brahminical priesthood throughout the country were impatient at the proselyting efforts of the missionaries, whilst the Mahomedans, as I have shown before, were discontented at seeing the only kingdom connected with them by faith swallowed up by the paramount Power. The King found, in fact, that there never would be a time more propitious for an attempt to overthrow the British. Acting accordingly under able advice, he at once commenced a system of tampering with the native army. Of the Mahomedans he was sure; the Hindoos, already disaffected, might be acted upon by means of their religion. The new system of administration in Oudh would, he felt satisfied, cause considerable vexation to the families of the Sepoys, and, consequently, no little discontent amongst the Sepoys themselves. His agents were accordingly directed to lay stress on this new interference of the British with the privileges of the natives. It was pointed out to them that they were the original owners of the land, the lords of the soil, but that now, gradually and insidiously, the British were depriving them of their rights, and resolved to go on until they had subverted their religion. An alliance was at the same time entered into with the King of Delhi, who entered heart and soul into the plot, and it was finally determined that throughout the Bengal Presidency, from Calcutta to Peshawur, there should be a simultaneous rising on one day, in which the life of no Christian should be spared. The month of August, 1857, by which time it was hoped the Queen-mother would have left England, was fixed upon for the outbreak.

Had the measures of the Government of India been conducted at this time with even ordinary prudence, had the Military Secretary not blundered in a manner which would have been unpardonable in an ensign of twelve months' standing, it is probable that the attempts of the King of Oudh to tamper with the native army would have altogether failed. In the absence of tangible evidence on the subject, it had been difficult to convince the Hindoo Sepoys that their religion was actually in danger, and without satisfactory proof on that point they were unwilling to rise against the Government. In fact the plot was beginning to languish, when, at this juncture, the combined ignorance and folly of Colonel Birch gave the King of Oudh the very opportunity he had been seeking for in vain.

It is well known that the chief object of a Hindoo's veneration is the cow. She is in his eyes the sacred animal, the visible presence of the Creator on earth. Her life is not only precious, but to take it the greatest crime of which man could be guilty. The slaughter of a cow in a Hindoo village would always have been the signal for a rise. So convinced, indeed, were the Governments of former days of the necessity of respecting this prejudice, that in the large towns where Europeans were stationed a paddock or compound, surrounded by high walls, was set apart for the reception of bullocks intended for their food. The Hindoos always ignored the existence of such a spot; indeed all possible means were adopted to conceal it from them.

To kill a cow openly was openly to violate their religion, and the practice was consequently forbidden throughout India.

Yet, in the face of these prejudices, of the order to respect them, and of the danger of the consequences which must result from their violation, no sooner had the Government of India resolved to introduce the Enfield rifle partially into the Indian army, than the Secretary to Government deliberately issued an order, which, by violating the caste of the Hindoo, was alone sufficient to bring about a revolt. The Enfield rifle required a particular species of cartridge, and this cartridge in England was greased with lard made from the fat either of the hog or the ox. Without reflecting, or if reflecting, ignoring the consequences of his act, Colonel Birch ordered that the cartridges for use in India should be made up similarly to the cartridges in use in England, and should be used by the native troops—that is to say, that Hindoo Sepoys should handle cartridges besmeared with the fat of their sacred animal, the cow! The knowledge of this fact was conveyed to the Hindoos in the most casual manner. These cartridges had been made up by Lascars—men of an inferior caste. It happened that one day a Lascar requested a Brahmin Sepoy to give him a drink of water from his lotah, or brass pot. The Sepoy refused on the plea of his superior caste, and that the lotah would be defiled by the touch of the Lascar. The Lascar in reply taunted him for talking of defilement, when he every day touched cartridges besmeared with cows' fat. The Hindoo, horror-stricken, rushed to his comrades and told them the story: they inquired, and found it true to the letter. Indignant, believing themselves deceived by the Government, they wrote an account to their comrades throughout India. From that moment the work of the agents of the King of Oudh was easy.

For a man occupying the position of Military Secretary to the Government of India to make so gross a blunder was unpardonable. Equally so that, when the mistake was discovered, no disavowal was made by Government for four months, and then only in consequence of the outbreak at Meerut! Well aware that the idea had taken possession of the Sepoys' minds, Colonel Birch made no attempt to counteract it, gave no intimation that the manufacture of greased cartridges had been stopped. He calmly surveyed the mischief his acts had caused, and—did nothing. Yet this man, whose blundering incapacity caused the revolt, is still Secretary to the Government of India in the military department!

The consequences of this gross mismanagement were quickly apparent. The agents of the native conspirators were not the men to allow such an opportunity to slip through their fingers. On the 24th of January, less than a week after the discovery of the greased cartridges, the telegraph office at Barrackpore was burned down. An idea seemed to pervade the minds of the Hindoos that the Government was resolved to Christianise them all; that as the plan of open conversion, pursued now for several years, had failed entirely, it had been resolved to resort to insidious and secret measures to bring about the same end; that Lord Canning had undertaken the government of India with that sole object in view, and that he had engaged to

accomplish it in three years. Hence the greasing of the cartridges: hence the changes that were talked about in their dress and equipments. They knew our skill; they witnessed the constant scientific improvements evinced in railways, electric telegraphs, &c., and they dreaded lest some morning they should awake and find themselves, owing to some unaccountable ingenuity on our part, deprived of their religion and caste. Discontent took possession of their minds; they were in perpetual dread of something undefined, supernatural: a restless desire of showing their discontent evinced itself, and resulted, after nearly a week's hesitation, in the perpetration of the act recorded above, viz. the burning of the electric telegraph office at Barrackpore.

This station, distant about sixteen miles from Calcutta, was garrisoned entirely by native troops; at this time four regiments were quartered there, the 2nd Grenadiers, the 34th Native Infantry, the 43rd Light Infantry, and the 70th Native Infantry. Between Calcutta and Dinapore, an extent of 400 miles in length and enormous breadth, there was but one European regiment, the 53d Foot. Half of this regiment garrisoned Fort William, the other half was stationed at Dumdum, about seven miles from Calcutta. In case of any disturbance, not a single man could have been spared from the wing located in the fort, whilst the other was insufficient in strength to put down a simultaneous rising of the town and of the native army.

Such an idea, at this time, never suggested itself to a single European in the country. Although after the burning of the telegraph office on the 24th, scarcely a night passed over without the perpetration of some act of incendiarism, these acts were never traced to their source. The Government were confident and callous. Although about this time* the excited state of the minds of the Sepoys, consequent upon the discovery of the nature of the grease, was reported to them, not a single explanation was offered, not an attempt made to soothe them. It is true that an order was issued, after the interval of almost a month, to serve out no more greased cartridges, but, in the absence of any accompanying explanation, the Sepoys viewed that merely as an evidence that the Government was baffled for the time, and waited only a more convenient season for the renewal of their insidious attacks on their caste.

But, although the eyes of our Government were blinded, those of the King of Oudh and his agents were wide open to the importance of the occasion. The minds of the Sepoys at Barrackpore were hourly worked upon, and with such effect, that letters were despatched in shoals to every regiment in the service, giving full details, often amplified and exaggerated, of the cartridge business. Agents were also despatched, well supplied with money, to every station in India; these men were directed to prepare the native army for an immediate rise, and to adopt every possible means to bring about the revolt without the cognizance of the authorities.

* January and February, 1857.

The King of Oudh was well served. The whole army succumbed to his influence; a very considerable portion of the large police force came into his plans, and even where his agents were unsuccessful, in not one instance were they betrayed.

By the middle of the month of February, the discontented amongst the native regiments at Barrackpore had assumed such an appearance, and had risen to such a height, that General Hearsay commanding the Presidency division found it necessary to assemble the troops, in order to point out to them the absurdity of the fears they entertained for their religion. General Hearsay was a very gallant cavalry officer, well acquainted with the native character: he spoke the language also with rare facility. It was not in his power to do more than harangue the troops and report their state of mind to the Government: the first he did well, and at the outset with some effect; but as the second measure produced no explanation or sign from the head of the military department, the Sepoys, still secretly instigated, soon returned to their former state of murmuring against their masters.

To give one instance of the apathy of the Government at this momentous period it will suffice to state, that although disaffection had been manifested, in the most marked manner, by the Sepoys at Barrackpore and Dumdum on account of the greased cartridges, towards the end of January, it was not before the middle of the following month that Colonel Birch telegraphed to the schools of musketry at Secalkote and Umballah to prohibit the use by the Sepoys at those stations of the greased cartridge. Long before the message reached Secalkote (in the heart of the Punjab) those cartridges had been distributed to, and used by, the native troops there located.

The condition of the troops at Barrackpore, towards the latter end of February, was that of men who felt themselves aggrieved, who were resolute to revenge themselves on the supposed authors of their grievances, but who were restrained, partly by fear, partly by policy, from setting about it at once. Suddenly a spark lighted on the powder: it did not, fortunately for us, at the moment ignite, but a low rumbling noise, sufficient to enable us to make some preparation, warned us of our danger. The spark was first visible at Berhampore; it fizzed subsequently at Barrackpore; but the grand explosion took place two months later at Meerut!

On the 24th February, a small guard of the 34th Regiment N.I. arrived in the station of Berhampore, distant from Calcutta about one hundred and twenty miles. As was customary in such cases, the men of the 19th Regiment N.I., then stationed at Berhampore, feasted the men of the 34th guard, and of course inquired after the doings of their comrades at Barrackpore. The 34th men made a clean breast of it; they poured all their grievances into the sympathising ears of their entertainers: not an item in the catalogue was left out—the cartridges, the beef fat, Lord Canning's supposed mission, all were enumerated; the determination of the Barrackpore brigade to mutiny on the first convenient occasion was dwelt upon;—nothing,

in short, was omitted which could possibly work upon the feelings of their listeners.

It is a remarkable fact, illustrative of the native character, that in a regiment numbering a thousand men, composed of Mahomedans and Hindoos, of high caste and low caste, not a single man after hearing the astounding stories of the 34th guard thought it worth while to go to his commanding officer or to the adjutant of the regiment and inquire into their truth. They had been associated for years with their European officers, had marched with them from station to station, had received from them the kindest treatment, and, moreover, were conscious of the pride with which they were regarded, and of the implicit confidence placed in them by all. Yet on hearing for the first time, perhaps, tales which were brought them by men of another regiment, of a vast conspiracy brewing against the state, not one of them reported the circumstance or even inquired if it were true!

The acute sensitiveness peculiar to the natives on matters affecting their caste doubtless induced them to accept all they heard as literal truth. For a whole day they brooded over it; in making the morning report to their officers on the 25th of February, their demeanour was quite respectful, there was not an outward sign of the excitement which reigned within. But their feelings had been too much worked upon to allow this passive submission a longer sway. A slight circumstance supplied the igniting spark. On the 25th February, Colonel Mitchell, commanding the 19th, ordered a parade for exercise with blank ammunition for the following morning. In the evening, the blank cartridges were served out to the men. They were of the very same description as those which for a century past had been used by the Bengal Army. These particular cartridges had, in fact, been made up before even an Enfield rifle had reached India, and had been made over to the 19th magazine by the 7th Regiment N.I., on the latter leaving the station. In ordinary circumstances no objection whatever would have been made by any Sepoy to use similar cartridges. But the passions of the men had been roused; their feelings had been so excited that they could no longer control them; they were beyond the power of reason; they felt satisfied that their caste was to be taken away by means of cartridges, and their excitement persuaded them that these were the fatal messengers. They at first refused to receive them, and it was only when their commanding officer threatened all recusants with court-martial that they took them in gloomy silence. That night they held a consultation. The "multitude of counsellors" gave new energy to their fears, and in a moment of fanatical frenzy the regiment rose as one man, and took possession of their arms, shouting defiance.

Intelligence of these facts was promptly conveyed to the commanding officer, Colonel Mitchell. Two courses were open to him. The only troops at the station besides the 19th were a detachment of native cavalry and a battery of native artillery. The night was pitch dark, and no movement could be made with any certainty. He might either, therefore, have despatched the cavalry and artillery to

guard the public buildings, the treasury, &c., and await the early dawn for ulterior operations, or he might at once march down on the lines and endeavour to coerce the mutineers. The first course seemed the most prudent, and was urged upon him; however, he adopted the other, and moved as quickly as possible on his mutinous regiment. The night was so dark that he was compelled to use torches to enable him to find the way; in this manner, and with difficulty, he moved on.

In the meanwhile the 19th having seized their arms, remained drawn up in front of their lines, waiting apparently for their European officers to take the initiative. The ground near their lines was interspersed here and there with tanks, and on these, by the light of the torches, they beheld the artillery and cavalry advancing. Had they been thoroughly evil-disposed, it would have been easy for them, in darkness as they were, to have picked off their officers and the artillery-men, whilst the nature of the ground and the darkness of the night would have prevented all idea of danger from the cavalry. They were, however, more excited than ill-disposed, and with arms in their hands they waited the first movement of their officers.

On his part Colonel Mitchell could not have been insensible to the insecurity of his own position; he was marching at the head of natives against natives. Could he depend upon them? It was at all events doubtful. Were he to give the order to charge or to fire, was he certain that he would be obeyed? And if he were not obeyed, not only would there be three regiments in revolt instead of one, but the lives of the residents of that and surrounding stations would be jeopardised. Besides which he found, as had been pointed out to him, that the nature of the ground and the darkness of the night would prevent the possibility of his acting efficiently against the mutineers.

Something, however, must be done: he felt that. After deliberately weighing every circumstance of his position, he deemed it most prudent to try in the first instance the effect of conciliatory measures. He accordingly addressed the men of the 19th; he pointed out to them the absurdity of their fears and the enormity of their offence, and conjured them to give up their arms and return peaceably to their lines.

The 19th on their part were not over-anxious to push matters to extremities; their excitement was beginning to wear off, and many of them felt a little ashamed of themselves. Still they were sensible of the advantage of their position, and seemed resolved not to act under coercion. In reply, therefore, to their Colonel, they expressed their readiness to return to their lines, and to restore their arms to the proper place, provided only the artillery and cavalry were first moved away.

To this unmilitary concession Colonel Mitchell felt averse to accede. However, for the reasons above stated, he was powerless: he did not wish to provoke the 19th into a more open demonstration: he consented then to the proposal, and moved off the artillery and

cavalry. The 19th gave up their arms, returned to their lines, and the *émeute* was at an end.

Reflections on Col. Mitchell's conduct.—Colonel Mitchell's conduct on this trying occasion was much criticised at the time, and he was generally condemned for not at all risks enforcing his order to the mutineers to lay down their arms. Subsequent events have proved that had he done so—had he ordered the artillery to fire, or the cavalry to charge—he would not in all probability have been obeyed. Or, even had they endeavoured to obey him, the darkness of the night would have prevented any efficient working of the guns, whilst the Sepoys could have picked off the gunners with but little risk to themselves. Had he been worsted in the encounter, the rebellion would have been precipitated two months; the regiments at Barrackpore would have risen *en masse*, and the consequences to the metropolis would have been fearful.

The writer is of opinion that if Colonel Mitchell erred, he erred in not adopting the advice said to have been tendered to him of placing guards over the treasury and public buildings till the morning, and then acting with decision. But even then, as shown above, the result would have been doubtful; and every Englishman ought to be thankful that the matter ended as it did.

The news of this outbreak reached Calcutta about the 4th of March, and first opened the eyes of the Government to a sense of their insecurity. They had but one European regiment between Calcutta and Dinapore. It would be unsafe to punish the 19th Native Infantry without having European troops at hand to overawe them, and Government had literally none. Perhaps, after securing the fort and public buildings, about two hundred men might have been available—a mere handful amongst five native regiments deeply imbued with a spirit of fanaticism. In such a crisis there was but one course for Government to pursue; and it is but justice to say that they pursued it. No intimation was conveyed to the 19th of the sense entertained of their conduct. They were allowed to do their duty as usual; but on the morning of the 6th of March the Oriental Company's steamer "Bentinck" steamed for Rangoon, with orders to bring up H.M.'s 84th Foot to Calcutta with the utmost possible dispatch.

On the account of the disturbance at Berhampore reaching Barrackpore, great excitement was manifested by the Sepoys of the regiments at that station, more especially by those of the 2d and 34th Regiments. They did their duty, it is true, but with a sullen doggedness which it was impossible to conceal: it was known that nightly meetings took place in their lines, at which the conduct of the 19th in seizing their arms was applauded, and great sympathy expressed for them. A report of these meetings was made to Government; but not having the power to interfere with effect, they wisely abstained from noticing the matter.

Reports about this time reached Calcutta of ill-feeling and disaffection evinced at the important stations of Meerut and Lucknow. The occurrence of constant incendiarisms in the neighbourhood of the

Sepoy lines cast suspicion upon them, and served to show, not only that they were dissatisfied, but were seeking opportunities to evince their feelings.

At length, on the 20th of March, to the great satisfaction of every one in Calcutta, the "Bentinck" returned from Rangoon. H.M.'s 84th were immediately conveyed to Chinsurah, a station eight miles distant from Barrackpore; and orders were immediately transmitted to the officer commanding the 19th Regiment to march his corps to Barrackpore.

Greater excitement than ever prevailed at that station in consequence of the arrival of the 84th. The native troops, feeling themselves guilty of conspiring against the state, imagined that this move was directed against them. In the 34th especially the mutineers' whispers became louder and louder; they openly expressed their sympathy with the 19th, and scarcely concealed their intention to stand by the men of that regiment in the event of their offering any resistance.

Happily for us, these feelings found a vent before the 19th reached Barrackpore.

On the 29th March it was reported to Lieut. Baugh, Adjutant of the 34th, that several of the men of his regiment were in a very excited state; and that one of them especially, Mungul Pandy by name, was traversing the lines, armed with a loaded musket, calling upon his comrades to rise, and declaring himself that he would shoot the first European he came across. On receipt of this intelligence Lieut. Baugh put on his uniform, mounted his horse, and, with a pair of loaded pistols in his holsters, rode down to the parade-ground. It must here be mentioned, that immediately in front of the Quarter-guard of the 34th Regiment the station gun was posted, from which the morning and mid-day salutes were fired. Mungul Pandy, on hearing of Lieut. Baugh's approach, concealed himself behind this gun; and as that officer drew near, he took a deliberate aim and fired. The ball wounded the horse in the flank, and brought him with his rider to the ground. Lieut. Baugh, however, quickly disengaged himself; and snatching up one of his pistols, advanced on Mungul Pandy, who, finding himself unable to load his musket a second time, had taken up a sword which he had with him. Lieut. Baugh fired and missed. Before he could draw his sword the Sepoy was on him, with one blow brought him to the ground, and but for timely assistance would have then and there killed him.

All this took place, it must be recollected, in front of the Quarter-guard of the 34th, and not thirty yards distant from the guard of a jemadar and twenty Sepoys there located. These men not only made no effort to assist their officer, but showed evident sympathy with Mungul Pandy. The Sergeant-major of the regiment, who was a short distance behind Lieut. Baugh at the time, called out to them to assist him; but their jemadar forbad them to stir. At this juncture, just as Lieut. Baugh had been struck down wounded, the Sergeant-major came up breathless, and attempted to seize Mungul Pandy; but he, too, was wounded and struck down. Upon this the jemadar

advanced with the men of his guard; but these, instead of assisting their European officers, commenced striking their heads with the butt-ends of their muskets. To this treacherous conduct there was one exception. The Mahomedan orderly who had followed Lieut. Baugh from his house, arrived on the scene of action in sufficient time to seize Mungul Pandy just as he had succeeded in reloading his musket. He was quickly followed by General Hearsay and other officers, who had been roused by the firing; and by their joint aid the officers were rescued from their perilous situation. Mungul Pandy, on being seized, made an abortive effort to shoot himself. He was then taken off the ground and lodged in the Quarter-guard of the 70th Regiment. Affairs wore a very serious aspect when General Hearsay reached the ground.* That gallant officer, a friend and pupil of Sir Charles Napier, comprehended all in an instant. He felt that to give way now would be to incite a mutiny. Drawing a pistol from his belt, he rode up to the men of the guard, and ordered them back to their posts, declaring he would with his own hand shoot the first man who showed any symptoms of disaffection. This conduct had the desired effect; the men were for the moment overawed; and the dark cloud which appeared to be on the very point of bursting passed quietly away.

In order more effectually to convince the Sepoys that loyalty would always meet with a fitting reward from the British Government, General Hearsay then and there promoted Sheikh Pultoo, the Mahomedan orderly who had rescued Lieutenant Baugh and the Sergeant-major, to the rank of havildar. This had a most salutary effect: and yet it will scarcely be believed, that for this act a severe wigging was administered to the gallant officer by the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, Colonel Birch, whose quibbling mind and red-tape instincts could see no necessity for so grave a departure from rule!

But although the station had resumed its outward appearance of calm, within the lines all was disaffection. The jemadar and the Sepoys of the Quarter-guard, who, strange to say, had not then been, and were not for two or three days afterwards, placed in arrest, reproached their comrades for not taking advantage of so fine an opportunity of rising against and massacring the "Feringhees." The recriminations, however, were short, and the 34th, in conjunction with the 2nd Grenadiers, proceeded to mature a fresh plan, the nature of which will shortly be detailed.

On the 30th March the 19th Native Infantry arrived at Barraset, about eight miles distant from Barrackpore. It had by this time transpired that they were to march into the latter station for the purpose of being disbanded: still the behaviour of the men was respectful; and in order to avert their fancied doom, they had sent in

* The men of the regiment had turned out in undress in front of their lines, and had shown, by their gestures and other signs, that their sympathies were all with Mungul Pandy. They had even jeered at Lieutenant Baugh as he passed them wounded, and reproached them for not assisting him.

a petition to the Governor-General, offering, in case they were pardoned, to proceed at once to China, or to serve anywhere on land or sea. In short, they showed a repentant spirit, and were never less inclined to join in a conspiracy against the state. On arriving on the morning of the 30th at Barraset, they found a deputation from the 34th awaiting their arrival. It has since transpired that these men made them a proposal — the result of their deliberations of the previous night — which it was well for us that they did not accept. On that very morning, Her Majesty's 84th, from Chinsura, a wing of the 53d Foot from Dumdum, a couple of European batteries from the same place, and the Governor-General's body-guard (native) from Calcutta, had arrived at Barrackpore, and had been ordered to appear on parade with the native regiments at five o'clock on the following morning. The proposal made by the 34th to the 19th was to the following effect: that they should, on that same evening, kill all their officers, march at night into Barrackpore, where the 2nd and 34th were prepared to join them, fire the bungalows, surprise and overwhelm the European force, secure the guns, and then march on to and sack Calcutta.

Had the 19th been as excitable then as they had shown themselves on the 25th of February, these views might possibly have been entertained; but they were repentant, and ashamed of their former excess. That they were not thoroughly loyal is proved by the fact that the tempters were not reported: they were suffered to return unbetrayed, but their scheme was at once and definitively rejected.

On the following morning the 19th Regiment marched into Barrackpore. An order by the Governor-General in Council, in which their crime was recapitulated, their fears for their religion pronounced absurd, and their disbandment directed, was read out to them in the presence of the assembled troops before enumerated. On being ordered to lay down their arms, they obeyed without a murmur; many of them, indeed, showed signs of deep contrition. They were then paid up before their comrades, and were marched across the river without arms. They had ceased to belong to the Company's army.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DISBANDING OF THE 19TH REGIMENT TO THE REVOLT AT MEERUT.

The 19th were disbanded, and in the opinion of the Government a lesson had been thereby read to the Sepoys which they would not easily forget. They argued that Lord Ellenborough, by the disbandment of a regiment in 1844 (the 34th Native Infantry), had repressed

a mutiny; and that Sir Charles Napier, by a similar measure in 1849, had effected the same end; quite oblivious of the fact, that the entire circumstances were dissimilar, and that both those statesmen had followed up their disbanding orders by others. But the Indian statesmen who were at this time in power affected to sneer both at Lord Ellenborough and at Sir Charles: their pattern statesman was Lord Dalhousie (the real author of the mutiny), and they chuckled at the ease with which they had (to their own satisfaction) disproved the vaticinations of that nobleman's rival. Colonel Birch, in particular, was especially gleeful on this occasion. He — the man of whom Sir Charles had made a laughing-stock! — had he not by a single movement effected all that Sir Charles Napier had been able to bring about by twenty general orders? So at least he thought, or professed to think. All was confidence, superciliousness, and self-congratulation on the part of the Government officials! But although the Government was satisfied, the public was ill at ease. Symptoms were showing themselves throughout India, which the oldest Indian officers had never witnessed before. It was evident to them that some great movement was in progress, although they were not in a position either to fathom its causes or to avert its consequences. The bare hint of such an idea to Colonel Birch was sufficient to expose one to an outpouring of ridicule. That official's pluck at this epoch could not be questioned.

In the meantime, in April, the Sepoy, Mungul Pandy, had been brought to trial, and condemned to death. He made no confession, but stoically accepted his fate in the presence of all the troops at the station. The jemadar who commanded the guard of the 34th on the 29th March, and who had prevented that guard from assisting Lieutenant Baugh, had also been tried and condemned to death. The sentence, however, owing to some red-tape informalities originating with Colonel Birch, was deferred, most prejudicially to the public interests, to the 21st April. On that day the jemadar was brought to execution, and was hanged. Immediately before his death he harangued those around him, confessing the justice of his sentence, and warning others from following his example.

With this execution the Government appeared to rest satisfied. The atrocious conduct of the men composing the guard on the 29th March, evinced by their not only conniving at the attack upon their officer, but by themselves assaulting him and the Sergeant-major as they lay wounded on the ground, was quite overlooked. The Government appeared "satisfied of the loyalty of the 34th Regiment." Indeed, so convinced did they seem to be of the loyalty of every regiment in the Bengal Army, that at the end of the month of April they determined to send the 84th Foot back to Rangoon, and actually engaged transports for that purpose!

The Government came to this conclusion when in possession of reports from the commanding-officers of the different stations in India, which would have convinced any unprejudiced man that the whole army was ripe for revolt. At Agra the incendiarisms had been frequent, and the Sepoys had refused their aid to subdue the

flames; at Seealkote, letters had been discovered from the Barrackpore Sepoys, inciting their brethren at that distant station to revolt. At Umballah, the discontent had been so marked that the Commander-in-Chief himself had been compelled to assure the Sepoys that their apprehensions regarding their caste were groundless. At Lucknow, the Sepoys of the 48th, incensed at their doctor for tasting a bottle of medicine previously to making it over to the sick man, and construing that act into an attempt against their caste (although the system had been prevalent for an hundred years), had taken their revenge by burning down his bungalow. At Benares, too, a very strong feeling of disaffection had been evinced: in fact, there was scarcely a regiment in the Bengal Army which had not shown itself ripe for revolt. Still the Government professed themselves confident, and actually issued orders to the 84th to re-embark for Rangoon.

The truth is, they were in a panic, and, like weak men in that situation, they attempted to hide it from their friends by the assumption of a bullying manner, whilst they effectually showed it to their enemies by vain attempts at conciliation. Hence the wretchedly weak measure of sparing the guard of the 34th, who had beaten their officers; they actually feared to incense them, and believed they were acting the part of statesmen by saving them from condign punishment. Little did they know the native character! That very act, miscalled an act of mercy, tended more than anything else to convince the conspirators that the Government was afraid to strike, and encouraged them still further to develope their plans.

It has since transpired, that soon after the attack upon Lieut. Baugh had been reported to the Government, it had been determined to disband the 34th, and that an order was at the time drafted in which this resolution was announced. For upwards of three weeks that order was kept back. In whose possession it remained it is impossible now to state; but this fact is certain, that for upwards of a month the men of the 34th, including those who had assaulted Lieut. Baugh, were allowed to believe themselves trusted by the Government.

The fact is, that the advisers of the Governor-General, being for the most part members of the Civil Service, refused to recognise these disloyal symptoms as overt acts of mutiny; they endeavoured to persuade Lord Canning that they were mere partial and local disturbances, which should be met rather with conciliation than with severity. In truth they were unwilling to admit, even to themselves, that their own domination, extending over an hundred years, had completely failed in attaching even one section of the population to British rule. If they had previously been called upon to declare the class upon which they would most firmly rely in case of need, they would have named Jack Sepoy; they had pampered, petted, and indulged him until they thought they had made sure of him; they had, in their love of power, wrested the control over him from their military officers, by the encouragement of appeals from their decisions, and vested an overwhelming power in the Supreme Government themselves; they had witnessed his devotion to his officer when sub-

ordinated to him alone, and they imagined that the transfer of the subordination to themselves would have ensured the transfer the devotion also. They knew that the Sepoys were the mainstay of order throughout the country, that they represented the feelings of the entire population of Oudh, of Behar, of Gwalior, the Punjab, Nagpore, and Hydrabad: that so long as they were contented, the people would remain passive, if not altogether satisfied. The Sepoy, in fact, was their barometer, and they were unwilling to believe the steady indication of a cyclone. They would not even admit to themselves that their house was founded upon sand, liable to be levelled to the ground by the first storm.

And it is certainly true that they had little other surety for the tranquillity of the country than the fidelity of the Sepoy. Attached by education, training, and hereditary policy to the principle, "India for the Civil Service," they had steadily discouraged the settlement in the land of that other element which, in a crisis like that which, in spite of themselves, they felt approaching, might have formed a countervailing barrier to Mahomedan or Hindoo rebellion. Had independent Europeans been encouraged to invest their capital in the land of India; had not the terrors of subjection to a Hindoo or Mahomedan magistracy been held over their heads to prevent such a catastrophe (to the Civil Service); had they been allowed the smallest exercise of political power, or had the way to that power been open to them, an independent body of landholders would have arisen, who would have formed the connecting link between the Government and the natives, and also have been able, from their numbers and organisation, to have checked any outbreak on the part of the people of the country. But it was very evident that such a measure could not have been accomplished without invading the exclusiveness of the Civil Service. Hence it has always been (with the brilliant exception of Lord Metcalfe, who had thoroughly at heart the interests of India,) systematically opposed by the members of that body. Their policy has ever been to shut out independent Europeans from the country. To carry out this end they have encouraged the trade in opium, whilst they have neglected purposely the cultivation of cotton; they have restricted as much as possible public enterprises which necessitated settling in the land; and although this policy has resulted in a wide-spread rebellion, it will never be lost sight of so long as the rule exists that a man, were he to possess the highest administrative abilities, would be debarred from their exercise, because he did not in the first instance come out to India as a member of the Civil Service.

True to this policy they, as stated above, affected to make light of the discontent in the native army, and persuaded Lord Canning to view matters in the same light. The determination to disband the 34th was accordingly postponed, in the hope that affairs would settle down quietly, and that no further interference on the part of Government would be needed. In pursuance of this plan the 84th were ordered to re-embark for Rangoon.

In a few days they would have started, and the long-wished-for

opportunity would have been afforded to the mutineers; when, providentially, an event occurred at Lucknow which suddenly disturbed, although even that failed to rouse the Government from their apathetic attitude.

At Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, the conduct of the native troops had been for some time past in the highest degree disorderly. Nightly meetings and consequent conflagrations had been of frequent occurrence. The city had always been the hotbed of intrigue, and no efforts had been spared on the part of the agents of the King of Oudh to corrupt the native soldiery. On intelligence of the disbanding of the 19th Native Infantry reaching that city, the king's brother intimated to the native troops, that as they now saw the extent of the punishment awarded for mutiny, he was prepared to give service at a similar, or even an increased rate of pay, to all who might be discharged by the Company! The consequence was, that the troops at that station were on the verge of open revolt. Most fortunately for India, the Commissioner of Oudh, Sir Henry Lawrence, was a man who would not suffer himself to be deterred by any consideration from acting with vigour and determination. He was, without doubt, the ablest man in India. It was he who had laid the foundation of that administration in the Punjab, which had in so short a period developed the capacities of that noble province. For Oudh he was the very best ruler that India could produce. Versed in civil matters, he had to repair in the first instance the egregious errors perpetrated by his predecessor, Mr. Coverly Jackson, a red-tapist of the school of Messrs. Grant and Beadon. As a military man, he found himself suddenly called upon to check a rising mutiny. In that respect he has done marvels. At the moment of my writing (29th June), although the whole province of Oudh has risen against him,—a province larger than England,—he, with a handful of Europeans (500 men), holds Lucknow, the most disaffected city in India! He has proved himself a real man, indeed! How does his conduct contrast with that of Colonel Birch, Mr. Grant, and the other advisers of the Governor-General? It will be seen that his measures were successful, because they were totally opposed to the ideas of those who administered the Supreme Government of India.

Sir Henry Lawrence had not been an idle spectator of the movements amongst the troops at Lucknow, and he resolved to visit the first overt act of mutiny with condign punishment. An opportunity was not long wanting. On the 3d of May a letter from the 7th Oudh Irregular Infantry (formerly in the service of the ex-king) was intercepted and brought to him. This letter was addressed to the men of the 48th Regiment, and its purport was as follows:—"We are ready to obey the directions of our brothers of the 48th in the matter of the cartridges, and to resist either actively or passively." This letter was taken to a Brahmin Sepoy of the 48th. He communicated its contents to a havildar, and the latter to a subahdar. The three consulted over it, and resolved to bring the matter to the notice of the Commissioner. This was done. About the same time Sir Henry received intimation that the 7th Irregular

Infantry had proceeded to overt acts against their officers; and although none of them had been murdered, that result was more owing to their own courage than to the forbearance of the mutineers. The Adjutant, Lieut. Mecham, owed his life pre-eminently to his presence of mind. Four mutineers entered his house on the afternoon of the 3d, and told him to prepare for death; that personally they did not dislike him, but that he was a Feringhee, and must die. Lieut. Mecham was unarmed; they were armed to the teeth. Resistance was hopeless. He at once made up his mind to meet his fate with dignity and resolution. As the mutineers paused to listen to what he had to say, he replied, "It is true I am unarmed, and you can kill me; but that will do you no good. You will not ultimately prevail in this mutiny. Another Adjutant will be appointed in my place, and you will be subjected to the same treatment you have received from me." These words, delivered with coolness, without change of countenance or the movement of a muscle, seemed to strike the mutineers. They turned and left the house, leaving their Adjutant uninjured!

Tidings of these mutinous acts reached Sir Henry Lawrence on the evening of the 3d. Without a moment's delay, he ordered out Her Majesty's 32d Foot, the 13th, 48th, and 71st Native Infantry, the 7th Cavalry, and a battery of eight guns, manned by Europeans, and proceeded at once to the lines of the mutineers, distant about seven miles. Darkness had set in before he arrived there; but so prompt had been his movements, that the 7th were completely taken by surprise. They were instantly ordered to form up in front of their lines. In the presence of a force so imposing, they had no resource but to obey. The infantry and cavalry were then formed on either side of them, the guns within grape distance in front. The 7th, completely cowed, awaited their doom. They were ordered to lay down their arms: they obeyed. At this moment the artillery portfires were lighted. A sudden panic seized them, with the cry, "Do not fire! do not fire!" Mad with terror, they rushed frantically away, cowed into repentance. The ringleaders, and most of their followers, were secured that night by the native cavalry and infantry, and were confined pending trial.

Thus easily was suppressed the first mutiny at Lucknow. It has since transpired that the whole of the 71st, and very considerable portions of the 48th Native Infantry and 7th Cavalry, sympathised with the mutineers. Had Mr. Grant's and Col. Birch's plan, adopted by Lord Canning, of coquetting with mutineers, of giving in to them, of fearing to strike, of merely dismissing men for attacking their officers (an offence for which many European soldiers have suffered death); had, in fact, a delay occurred at Lucknow similar to that which occurred at Barrackpore in dealing with the 34th—a delay of three weeks—then, in all probability, that night or the following would have seen all Lucknow in revolt. It may be said that the troops subsequently did revolt. It is true; but they gave Sir Henry Lawrence nearly a month to prepare himself; and he proved that he was not the man at such a crisis to waste even an hour. When the

revolt which had long been foreseen did come, every preparation which it was possible for human foresight to devise had been made. The consequence was, that the mutineers were baffled; Sir Henry kept Lucknow, and still keeps it, though the whole of Oudh, almost the whole of India, is in arms against him. Had the revolt of the 30th of May occurred on the 3rd, there could have been but one result—our European troops would have been surprised, and every European resident murdered.

On the 4th of May the electric telegraph conveyed to the Supreme Government of India at once the account of the mutiny at Lucknow and of its suppression. A new book was in that act opened for Lord Canning's perusal, and he profited by it. The conduct of the men of the 34th at Barrackpore had been characterised by a sullen doggedness which could not be misconstrued: they were evidently watching their opportunity. When called upon to name the men of the guard who had attacked Lieut. Baugh and the Sergeant-major, they had steadily refused. Their officers, with one, or, perhaps, two exceptions, had declared before a Court of Inquiry that they had lost all confidence in their men. Some, unconnected with the regiment, attributed their conduct to the ill-judged zeal for proselytism evinced by their commanding officer, Colonel Wheler; but this, although it may have acted as an additional item in the balance against us, was scarcely the main cause of their ill-feeling. They were, in fact, thoroughly corrupted—more influenced even by the agents of the King of Oudh than by fears for their religion. A bad feeling at this time prevailed amongst all the regiments at Barrackpore. A jemadar of the 70th had been caught in the lines urging his men to revolt. He was tried and sentenced by a Court, composed of native officers like himself, to simple dismissal. This sentence was approved and confirmed by the Commander-in-Chief in India. To the jemadar himself it was no punishment at all. He owed four hundred rupees; and this dismissal eased him at once of his commission and his debt! But the effect upon the Sepoys is indescribable. "This," they said, "the only punishment for mutiny! They are afraid of us—we can do what we like."

There can be no doubt that the men of the 34th and of other regiments at Barrackpore only waited the departure of Her Majesty's 48th Foot from Chinsurah. They knew that that regiment had come up from Burmah, lightly equipped; that it would, in all probability, return thither soon; the rumour of their immediate departure was prevalent amongst them: they therefore waited, and would have waited with good purpose, but for the providential occurrence of the meeting of the 7th Irregular Infantry at Lucknow.

That mutiny, and the mode in which it was quelled by Sir Henry Lawrence, excited the admiration of Lord Canning. It also spurred him on to follow an example so nobly set. The account of the mutiny reached him by electric telegraph. It was not yet known in Calcutta or Barrackpore; the news would, however, be widely spread by the 8th or 9th. It was most desirable to act before that time; it was, indeed, essential. A blow must be struck. Upon the

34th, as the most guilty parties, it was resolved that it should fall. The order for the 84th to re-embark for Rangoon was at once rescinded; they were directed to proceed to Barrackpore on the 5th of May; the wing of the 53rd and two batteries of Artillery were also ordered there, and a message was despatched the same evening to the officer commanding at that station, directing him to parade all the troops at the station on the following morning, to read to them an order by the Governor-General therewith enclosed, and to conclude by paying up and disbanding the whole of the 34th Native Infantry who had been present in the lines during the outrage of the 29th of March.

On the morning of the 6th of May, accordingly, the troops were paraded, the order was read, the men were paid up and disbanded. None who were on the ground that morning and heard that order read—none who, in Calcutta, read that order at the same moment that they learned the fate of the mutineers, can ever forget the lamentable effect it produced, the universal impression it infused amongst all ranks, that the Government was absolutely afraid to punish. In this order the infamous conduct of the 34th was detailed at full length; their outrage upon their officer, the sullen apathy of the whole regiment on that occasion, their unconcealed sympathy with the murderer, were all dwelt upon in forcible language; but the punishment, the retribution for mutiny and connivance at murder, what was that?—simple disbandment! Even on the men of the guard, who looked on the attack with sympathy, and even followed it up by striking the wounded men as they lay on the ground, no severer punishment was inflicted. Punishment!—it was no punishment at all. The Kings of Delhi and Oudh had offered them a national service and a higher rate of pay, and the road to these was opened to them by their disbandment.

But the Governor-General was not content even with such a demonstration of weakness. Judging him from his written proclamations, he appeared desirous to impress upon the minds of the native army that the 34th had been guilty of a very venial offence; for he wound up his order—an order which he desired to be read at the head of every regiment, troop, and company in the service—by informing the army, that if they still refused to trust in their officers and the Government, and still allowed suspicions to take root in their minds, and to grow into disaffection, insubordination, and mutiny, their punishment, too, would be "sharp and certain." Sharp and certain as what?—as the punishment awarded to the 34th? The Bengal Army proved, by their after-conduct, that they wished for nothing better!

However, the order was read, and the men was disbanded. Did they express the least contrition for their offence? Did they show the smallest regret at leaving their officers and their colours? One incident, slight but significant, will suffice to show. They were allowed to keep their Kilmarnock caps, as they had paid for them. Before crossing the river, after having been paid up, many of them were seen to take off their caps, dash them on the ground, and

trample them in the mud; they would not carry away with them the smallest reminiscence of their service to the Company!

The 19th and 34th, the only two regiments of the Bengal Army who, up to this moment, had been guilty of overt acts of mutiny, had now been disbanded, and the Government fondly imagined that disaffection had been dismissed with them. Two orders of the Governor-General had distinctly intimated to the native troops, that the Governor-General had neither the desire nor the intention to interfere with their religion or their caste, and it was believed that these orders, coupled with the disbandment of the 19th and 34th, would have the best possible effect.

The men of the 34th had assaulted their officer on the 29th of March; punishment was meted out to them on the 6th of May. This interval of five weeks was not lost on the men of the Bengal Army. Throughout India every eye had been turned towards Barrackpore, to ascertain what fate would befall that regiment which had encouraged a murderous attack on one of its officers. For five weeks they looked, and looked in vain. It is true that the murderer himself and one of his sympathisers had been hanged, but less than that the Government could not do, without entirely abdicating its functions; otherwise all was quiet; the regiment had not even been rebuked for its share in the crime. The universal impression consequently prevailed amongst the Sepoys that the Government could not do without, and feared to punish them.

That these feelings would not have become modified by listening to the order published by the Governor-General, on the disbandment of the 34th, may be imagined from the fact, that when it reached Lucknow, Sir Henry Lawrence, one of the best judges of native character in India, refused to allow it to be read to the native troops, being of opinion that it would hasten rather than repress an outbreak.

At Meerut, disaffection had been more plainly manifested than in any other station in the North-western provinces. A rumour had been spread amongst the troops by means, it cannot be doubted, of the agents of the King of Oudh, that the Government had plotted to take away their caste, by mixing the grounded bones of bullocks with the flour sold in the market; that thus the Hindoo, partaking inadvertently of the substance of the deified animal, would find himself compelled to embrace Christianity. It was in vain that General Hewitt and the commanding officers of regiments attempted to combat these ideas; it was fruitless that they pointed out to the Sepoys, that during a century's occupation of India no interference with caste had ever been tried. Left to themselves, the Hindoos might possibly have been pacified by these assurances; but they were urged on by the Mahomedans, who pretended similar fears for their own religion. The disbandment of the 19th, did nothing to allay the discontent, whilst the impolitic delay which intervened between the crime of the men of the 34th and their punishment served greatly to increase it. During the latter end of April this discontent showed itself in the usual manner. Houses were burned down, officers were not saluted

as usual, and whispers were heard that a resolution had been arrived at in the lines not to touch a single cartridge.

To such a height were these manifestations carried, that it appeared advisable to bring them to the test. In the presence at the station of two European regiments, the 60th Rifles and the 6th Carabineers, besides two troops of Horse Artillery and a light field battery, General Hewitt had, or thought he had, a sufficient force to repress on the instant any act of open mutiny. He was resolved, therefore, that the Sepoys should see that he was there to give orders, they to obey them. A parade of the 3d Cavalry was accordingly ordered for the morning of the 6th of May. On the evening of the 5th, cartridges, the old cartridges of the kind which they and their fathers had always used, were served out to them. Eighty-five men in the regiment at once stepped out and refused to take them. They were subsequently offered, and again indignantly refused. But one course remained to the Brigadier. The men were confined, brought to a court-martial composed of native officers, and by those native officers condemned to periods of imprisonment with hard labour, varying from six to ten years.

In the meanwhile, impressed by the consequences resulting from Sir H. Lawrence's vigour and promptitude, the Government had sent instructions by telegraph to the commandants of the principal stations in India, directing that sentences pronounced on mutineers, whatever might be their nature, should be carried out at once, that no delay might be caused by a reference to army head-quarters. General Hewitt, therefore, prepared to carry out the sentences pronounced on the mutineers of the 3d Cavalry at the earliest possible moment. The condemned mutineers were placed under an European guard, composed of two companies of the 60th Rifles and twenty-five men of the Carabineers, and a general parade was ordered for the morning of the 9th. At day-break on that morning,* all the troops in the station, leaving the guards standing, paraded on the 60th Rifle parade-ground; the Carabineers, the 60th Rifles, the 3d Light Cavalry, the 11th and 20th Regiments of Native Infantry, a light field battery, and a troop of Horse Artillery. The Carabineers and the Rifles were then ordered to load and be ready, and the Horse Artillery the same. This done, the mutineers were marched on to the ground; the European troops and Artillery guns being so placed, that the least movement of disaffection or insurrection would have been followed by instant slaughter. The mutineers were in uniform when marched on to the ground; they were then stripped of their clothes and accoutrements; and the armourers' and smiths' departments of the Horse Artillery being in readiness, every man was ironed and shackled for ten years' imprisonment on the hard roads, with the exception of five, whose period of bondage was only six years. These unfortunate wretches looked miserably crest-fallen and depressed, and many of them, putting up their hands, appealed to the General for mercy. None, of course, was

* I am indebted to the talented correspondent of the Calcutta *Englishman* for the graphic account of this morning's proceedings.

vouchsafed, and the work went steadily on until all had been heavily ironed. The 3d Cavalry looked very much humbled, mounted with their swords drawn and sloped, silent spectators of the doom of their comrades. When the ironing had been completed, the prisoners reproached their comrades for allowing the punishment to be carried out. It is now evident, that an understanding existed between the culprits and the native soldiery, both infantry and cavalry, at Meerut; that these latter had sworn not to allow the sentence to be carried into effect. The sight, however, of the loaded guns and the two European regiments was sufficient to chill their ardour; at all events, the prisoners were carried away, and they made no sign.

Had it been deemed advisable still to keep the prisoners under an European guard, the natives might have been overawed, and all yet have gone well; but apparently the necessity for such a deviation from the usual course of procedure did not suggest itself to the authorities, and the mutineers were made over manacled to the civil authorities. By these they were lodged in the jail—a building some two miles distant from the cantonment, and guarded entirely by native burkundazes.

Meanwhile the native troops returned to their lines, furious with pent-up indignation. There can be no doubt that on that afternoon they matured their plans for a rise; messengers were dispatched to Delhi, to inform the regiments there of the projected move, and to warn them to be ready to receive them on the 11th or 12th. They resolved to rise on the evening of the following day (Sunday), whilst the Europeans should be in church, to release their imprisoned comrades, fire the station, and to slaughter every man, woman, or child, pertaining to the Christian community. The originators of this plan were the men of the 3d Cavalry; but they found the men of the 20th Regiment as eager as themselves to join in any insurrection. Not so, however, with the 11th Native Infantry. This regiment had but recently arrived in the station, and whether sufficient opportunity had not been afforded for corrupting them, or for some other unexplained reason, they hung back, and expressed a decided disinclination to join in any attack on their officers. They did not, however, betray the secret.

All this time the authorities were unsuspicious: the havildars made the morning report to their officers; the men of the European Regiment attended morning service as usual, and there was no sign of the coming storm. The day passed away as Sundays generally pass in India, and not even the sergeants, who live in the native lines, had noticed anything to call for report, or even for remark. Evening church-time was approaching: the 60th Rifles were turning out with their side-arms to proceed thither; officers, too, were dressing either for church or for an evening ride. Sepoys! restrain your impatience for half-an-hour longer, and Meerut is your own. Providentially they cannot restrain it. Suddenly the alarm of fire is given; then there is loud shouting, as if the Sepoys were turning out to quench the flames. But, then, that volley of musketry, followed by another and another! those discordant yells! that clattering of cavalry! the bugle sound of the alarm! It is not fire only that

has caused this direful outcry—it is mutiny!—insurrection!—
THE BENGAL ARMY HAS REVOLTED!

It was nearing five o'clock on that memorable afternoon when, at a given signal, the 3rd Light Cavalry and the 20th Native Infantry rushed out of their lines, armed and furious. A detachment of the former regiment at once galloped in the direction of the jail. On reaching it, its gates were opened to them without resistance, and they at once liberated all its inmates, including their imprisoned comrades: a native smith was at hand to strike off their irons. These men, infuriated by their disgrace, ran with all possible speed to their lines, armed themselves, and mounted; they then rushed to the scene of action, yelling fearfully, and denouncing death to every European. Meanwhile the remaining portion of the 3rd Cavalry and the 20th Native Infantry had proceeded to the lines of the 11th with all possible speed. Thither also the officers of that regiment, alarmed by the shouting and noise, had gone before them. They found Col. Finnis haranguing his men, and endeavouring to keep them firm to their colours. The men were wavering when the 20th arrived. The men of this regiment, whose hands were already red with the blood of several of their own officers, seeing this hesitation and its cause, at once fired at Col. Finnis. The first shot took effect on his horse only, but almost immediately afterwards he was riddled with balls. All discipline, all better feelings, now vanished. It is true that the Sepoys of the 11th permitted their officers to escape with their lives; but having done this, the greater portion of them followed the example of the 20th. And now ensued a scene of disorder, rapine, and murder which pen cannot describe. Every house and building near the lines, except the hospital, had been fired; and the smoking and blazing barracks and houses, the yells of the mutineers, and the shouts and shrieks of the multitude gathered there, numbers of whom fell from the shots of the mutineers, made on that dark night a scene than which one cannot be imagined more horrible.* Officers galloping about, carrying orders to the European troops, were fired at, not only by the mutineers, but by the native guards placed over the public buildings for security. Ladies driving in their carriages, gentlemen in their buggies, who had left their houses unsuspicious of evil, were assaulted, and if not murdered, treated with a brutality to which death would have been a relief. Not only the Sepoys, but the released jail-birds, fifteen hundred in number—the population also, that "vile rabble" which is always available for plunder or murder, had joined the movement, and spread terror and desolation all around them. Nor were houses or public offices safe places of refuge from these assaults. Most of the houses in Meerut—all of those in the military lines—are thatched with straw, and easily inflammable: the plan of the insurgents was to set fire to the roof, and to murder the frightened residents as they quitted the burning dwelling. Many met their deaths in this way; more, providentially, escaped: yet not one of those in the latter category owed their safety to the mercy of their as-

* Correspondent *Bengal Hurkaru.*

sailants. In some instances outrages were perpetrated which the pen refuses to record. These men, whom we had pampered for a century, who had always professed the utmost devotion to us, seemed suddenly converted into demons. Nor was this a solitary example; other stations were destined to witness atrocities fouler, more brutal, and more treacherous than even those of Meerut.

Meanwhile unaccountable delay occurred in turning out the European troops, and night had set in before the Carabineers arrived on the parade-ground of the 11th Native Infantry. They found there the 60th Rifles and Artillery waiting for them. Their arrival was the signal for a move against the rebels. They found, however, that by this time their work of destruction within the station had been completed, and that they had betaken themselves to the Delhi road. Thither they followed them. The night, however, was too dark, and the movements of the insurgents too uncertain, to permit our troops to act with vigour. A portion of the rebels were, it is true, found in a wood, and shots were exchanged between them and the 60th Rifles. The Artillery, too, fired upon and dispersed them; but it was considered that nothing more effective could be done; that fifteen hundred jail-birds, maddened with the taste of blood, were at large, and might still inflict incalculable damage on the station; and that, at such a crisis, the presence of the troops was absolutely required there. These, at least, are all the reasons that can be imagined (for none have hitherto been assigned) for the languid pursuit of that evening. One fact is clear, that the rebels were not followed up with any vigour, and that, after seeing them clear of the station, the troops returned to the scene of the outbreak of the mutiny, and there bivouacked. The night was spent "in taking precautions against attack, and in measures preliminary to strengthening the place, so as to secure it, if the troops should be compelled to leave it."*

The horrors of that fearful night could scarcely have been surpassed. The rebels, it is true, had been driven away, but the liberated prisoners and the rabble continued their fearful work. It is true that European sentries were posted, with all possible celerity, in the different parts of Meerut; and the constant fire of their rifles showed that their presence was necessary. Still, in spite of all precautions, foul deeds were even then perpetrated. To every one it was a night of agonising suspense. Husbands had missed their wives, and wives their husbands; infants had been separated from their mothers, and mothers from their children. Many passed the night, depending entirely on the fidelity of their native servants; and it is gratifying to state that, in more than one instance, that fidelity was proof. To this source Mr. Greathed, the commissioner, and his wife, owed their safety. Their house—a flat-roofed one, fortunately—was one of the first attacked by the Sepoys. On the first alarm they fled to the roof; thither, on the least intimation from the servants, the Sepoys would have followed them: but these persisted in

* Correspondent *Bengal Hurkaru*.

the story that they had left the house; and the mutineers, after searching every room, at last believed them and went away. The courageous action of the ayah, or female servant, in the service of Captain and Mrs. Macdonald of the 20th Regiment, must here be recorded. She had heard the alarm, and had perceived the blood-stained mutineers advancing towards her master's house. Unable to save him or her mistress, she seized their two children, and concealing them as well as possible, carried them to a place of safety. They never saw their parents again. Subsequent experience has shown that the "brave and loyal Sepoy" does not disdain treating children of one and two years of age with the most cruel barbarity.

How that night passed with those poor sufferers, they alone can tell. The day at length dawned, and the sun shone on dismantled Meerut. Their worst sufferings were over; the houseless were sheltered, and order was in some degree restored. Thenceforth they were safe from further attack, and could watch the progress of the avalanche by which they had been almost overwhelmed.

As soon as it was ascertained that the mutineers had taken the road to Delhi, only forty miles distant from Meerut, messengers were despatched to intimate the fact to Brigadier Graves, commanding at that station. The situation of this officer was full of peril. Besides the officers and sergeants of the native corps, he had not a single European under his command. The garrison consisted of the 38th, 54th, and 74th Regiments, Native Infantry, and a battery of Native Artillery. The men of these regiments had hitherto shown no symptoms of disaffection; but the 38th was the corps which had so successfully defied Lord Dalhousie in 1852, and the men of it had ever since been impressed with the idea that the Government was afraid of them. The British rule in India seemed to be staked on their fidelity, and Brigadier Graves must have felt that the issue would at least be doubtful. But he was not the man to give way to despair under any circumstances; and he at once resolved to make the most of the means at his disposal.

The approach to Delhi from Meerut is defended by the little river Hindun, which is traversed by a small bridge. On receiving intimation of the movements of the rebels, the Brigadier's first idea was to cut away the bridge and defend the river. But there were two objections to this plan. The first was, that at the season of the year, the height of the hot weather, the river was easily fordable, and his position on the other bank might be turned. The second, that in case of their attempting that manœuvre, he would be compelled to fight (even if his men continued stanch) with the rebels on his front and flank, and the most disaffected city in India, the residence of the descendant of the Mogul, in his rear. This plan, therefore, was abandoned almost as soon as conceived, and he determined to content himself with defending the city and cantonments as best he could. As this might endanger the lives of the non-military residents, intimation was conveyed to them to repair to the Flagstaff Tower, a round building of solid brickwork, well capable of defence, and at some distance from the city. In many

instances that intimation never reached those for whom it was intended, by some it was received too late, but by none was it wilfully disregarded.

Meanwhile the regiments were ordered out, the guns loaded, and every possible preparation made. The Brigadier harangued the troops in a manly style; told them that now was the opportunity to show their fidelity to the Company to whom they had sworn fidelity, and by whom they had never been deceived. His brief, pithy address, was received with cheers. The 54th, especially, seemed eager to exterminate the mutineers, and loudly demanded to be led against them.* The Brigadier, responding to their seeming enthusiasm, put himself at their head, and led them out of the Cashmere Gate to meet the rebels, whose near approach had been announced. As they marched out in gallant order, to all appearance proud and confident, a tumultuous array appeared advancing from the Hindun. In front, and in full uniform, with medals on their breasts gained in fighting for British supremacy, confidence in their manner, and fury in their gestures, galloped on about two hundred and fifty troopers of the 3rd Calvary: behind them, at no great distance, and almost running in their efforts to reach the golden minarets of Delhi, appeared a vast mass of Infantry, their red coats soiled with dust, and their bayonets glittering in the sun. No hesitation was visible in all that advancing mass; they came on, as if confident of the result. Now the Cavalry approach nearer and nearer! At this headlong pace they will soon be on the bayonets of the 54th. These latter are ordered to fire; the fate of India hangs on their reply. They do fire, but alas! into the air; not one saddle is emptied by that vain discharge. And now the Cavalry are amongst them; they fraternise with them; they leave the officers to their fate; and these are remorselessly cut down wherever they can be found!

It was too true, indeed! The bold and confident bearing of the rebels was thus accounted for; the Delhi troops, too, had been corrupted. In shouting to be led against the mutineers, they had acted a part which to Asiatics is familiar from their youth, but which Englishmen accustomed to them all their lives have never been able to comprehend. All was now over with Delhi. The enraged troopers, accompanied by the greater part of the 54th, the other arrivals from Meerut, and gaining fresh recruits at every step from the 38th and 74th, dashed into the city, shooting in their progress all the Europeans they met with. Many of them pointed to the marks left by the manacles on their legs, as if to justify their atrocities. Not a Christian whom they could lay hold of was spared, and on the women death was the smallest of the barbarities inflicted. The Governor-General's agent, Mr. Simon Frazer, and Captain Douglas commanding the palace guards of the titular King of Delhi, were cut down in the very precincts of the palace. Mr. Jennings, the chaplain, and his daughter, were seized when making their way to

* Private account.

the king for his protection. They were brought before the monarch—a man the descendant of the house of Timour, born our pensioner and ever treated by the English Government with marked liberality. "What shall we do with them?" inquired the enraged troopers of the king. "What you like; I give them to you!" was the reply. This man and the King of Oudh were at the bottom of the conspiracy: it was thus that the former repaid British generosity.

Meanwhile Brigadier Graves, rallying a few men who had remained faithful, retreated to the Flagstaff Tower. Here he found a vast assemblage of ladies and gentlemen—all, in fact, who had received or who had been able to comply with his intimation. Here also were stationed a company of the 38th and two guns; and so great was the strength of the tower that it was imagined that these men, if they remained faithful, might hold it against the enemy. But when the Brigadier addressed them, it became evident that their hearts were with the rebels, and that they only waited an opportunity to join them.

A remarkable occurrence, a feat of gallant devotion, unsurpassed in any age or country, brought the matter quickly to a crisis.

The Delhi magazine, situated in the very heart of the city, contained at this time immense stores of ammunition;* it was in charge of Lieut. Willoughby, a young Artillery officer. Of him, as the writer had the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with him, he may be allowed to say a few words. He was a young man of modest unpretending worth; his mother, if I may be pardoned for mentioning her, (for she still lives), is a lady possessing very superior accomplishments, a refined taste, and a generous disposition. All these young Willoughby had inherited. Those who met him in society might pronounce him shy and reserved, for so he appeared to strangers; to appreciate him, it was necessary that he should be known intimately; and by those to whom that gratification was extended, his generous sentiments and steadfast principles were rated at their real value. There was nothing showy about him, all was sterling gold. He sought on every occasion the path of duty, and he followed it careless of the consequences. I am fully sensible of the feebleness of my pen when endeavouring to render homage to his merits; the deed I am about to chronicle speaks for itself, and will, I am certain, ensure for him at least the enthusiastic recollection of his countrymen to never-ending time.

Young Willoughby, in common with others, had heard of the approach of the rebels, of the insurrection of the troops sent out to check them, and of their rush upon the city. In the heart of the city was the magazine, and that building contained stores which would enable their possessors to arm all the extent of the wall of Delhi against an enemy. This consideration decided him; his duty was clear—that magazine should not fall into the hands of the

* The magazine contained about three hundred guns and mortars, twenty thousand stand of arms, and two hundred thousand shot and shell, besides other material.

rebels. The consequences to himself he little recked; they would most likely be fatal. There was, it is true, a subterranean passage, of which he might avail himself; but even there the effects of an explosion would probably be felt. He was convinced, that after the first desire for blood was glutted, there would be a rush to secure the stores in the magazine; there he could await the insurgents, and there should they find their doom.

It turned out as he predicted: on they came, red with gore, infuriated with slaughter: in the meanwhile he had laid the train and stood ready to fire it. Not for an instant did his coolness desert him; not for a second, when he placed in the balance his own life against theirs, did he hesitate; he thought only of the consequences to the rebels and to his countrymen hereafter. Gradually the place was filling, and yet the portfire was not applied. Now, now it is full—they are struggling for admittance, it will contain no more; and now he stoops, the steady hand is applied, the slow-match burns,—a few seconds, then a puff of white smoke,—an immense cloud of red dust—an explosion—and the bodies of two thousand* rebels are hurled into the air!

And he! where was he, the gallant author of the deed? Scorched, maimed, bruised, almost insensible, he still had life. How he escaped, how he afterwards got away, I cannot tell; but I read in the paper of this morning (1st July) that he had died of his injuries at Meerut. Let us hope that his death,—the death of one so young,—so gallant, so devoted to his country, will be still more terribly avenged. Will it be so? I cannot say. The proclamation of Mr. John Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Provinces, offering pardon to these villains, is yet unrepealed!

To those assembled at the Flagstaff Tower this explosion could have but one meaning: it plainly told, or seemed to tell, that the rebels had penetrated into the heart of the city, and would be upon them before long: it had, at all events, the effect of deciding the movements of the company of the 38th. The men, previously hesitating, now became actually hostile, and, taking possession of two guns which had been sent up to increase the defences of that position, they prepared to point them against the tower. It was now evident that nothing more could be effected: the troops, almost to a man, had revolted; the jail-birds, as at Meerut, had been released; the Delhi population, composed principally of ignorant and bigoted Mahomedans, were up in arms: this intelligence would shortly be conveyed to the surrounding inhabitants, who were chiefly Googiers, a race of savage marauders, and by them escape would be cut off. Not an instant was to be lost. Brigadier Graves perceived this, and advised every one to escape as best he could: his own conscience was clear: he had done his duty, and now that the inevitable hour of departure had arrived, he remained, the last to leave the ancient capital of the Mogul. Some on foot, others crowded in carriages, a few riding, the remnants of the Europeans left Delhi: their fate has yet

* The numbers are variously stated from 1500 to 3000.

to be related: some who were for six weeks afterwards despaired of have since turned up living; their adventures have to be told: the great proportion of them, we know, met with all but insurmountable difficulties and dangers, and the escapes of many remind one of the supernatural. Up to the date of writing but few authentic accounts have been received, but sufficient is known to make us long for the time when the story of each individual's adventures can be published.

Meanwhile the rebels reigned supreme in Delhi. Undismayed by the loss incurred at the magazine, perhaps thereby rendered more furious, they ruthlessly pursued every Christian. The officers' bungalows were all entered and searched: they were not, in a single instance, pillaged *by the Sepoys:* they significantly remarked that they wanted only life. Their deeds, too, have yet to be recorded and revenged. Language cannot describe the bitter animosity or the savage cruelty evinced by those who, up to a recent period, had been the chief pillar of British supremacy!

It will be sufficient to add, that from the first moment the King of Delhi showed sympathy with the revolters: the Europeans, who fled to him for refuge, he handed over to their tender mercies: their several regiments he called after the names of his sons; he proclaimed himself Emperor of India; and, after the first few days of disorder he appointed Lall Khan, a subahdar of the 3d Cavalry, commander-in-chief of his army. He threw for a great stake, and has more than once been within an ace of winning it.

To show how the revolt at Meerut gave the signal for a general rise over India; how successively the troops at Ferozpore, at Benares, at Allahabad, and at Cawnpore, in the provinces of Oudh and Rohilcund, rose against us, and for a time achieved success; how the atrocities of Meerut and Delhi were surpassed by those of Oudh and Allahabad, will be my task on a future occasion. I shall then be able to prove, if indeed proof be required, (for I hope and believe that the people of England will have already judged and decided), how, up to the very last moment, the members of the Government, true to their principle of "India for the Civil Service," refused to open their eyes to the magnitude of the danger, and endeavoured as much as possible to conceal its extent from Lord Canning; how, in pursuance of this policy, they rudely declined to take precautions against a rising of the troops at Barrackpore, until an accident disclosed a plan which was to have been executed on the following day for murdering every European; how, in spite of their miserable policy, Calcutta has three times been providentially preserved when on the very brink apparently of destruction; how, notwithstanding their assumed blindness to the public danger, the principal civil servants of Government took most extensive precautions for their own security. I shall also show how precisely the same policy was pursued in the North-west provinces; how Mr. John Colvin, when the massacres of Meerut and Delhi were fresh in the recollection of all, offered free pardon to the rebels on the sole condition of their laying down their arms; how, up to this hour, no official proclamation has been published disavowing that act; how by its operation many

mutineers, laden with plunder and red with the blood of our countrymen, have found their way to their homes.

I shall then ask if the people of England will permit this policy to be further carried out; whether they will allow India still to remain an appanage of the Civil Service? This noble country has been under the rule of that service for a century: the present insurrection is the inevitable result of that domination. They have had no root in the land; their interests have not been the interests of the people of India. We have lately seen how, in many parts of the country, the Indigo planters, men like Mr. Venables, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Chapman, have actually not only held their own factories, but have rescued the magistrates and others from the insurgents: in some instances the Commissioners have been compelled to invest them with magisterial powers. Whence was their authority derived? In what lay the secret of their immunity from outrage? The answer is plain: they are owners of the soil; their interests are the same as those of the population. These, then, are the men who ought to be made magistrates, in place of unfledged boys, ignorant of the people and imperfectly acquainted with the language of the country.

The last act of the Government has, as much as any other, exposed the "courage and capacity" of our civil administrators. So long as there was real danger they pretended to ignore it; but no sooner had the crisis passed away, than, looking back at it, appalled at its magnitude, they fell into a panic. They determined on a vigorous demonstration, one which should strike terror into the hearts of all. The question was, Whom they should attack? The rebels, unfortunately, were beyond their reach; Barrackpore was quiet. But a demonstration was necessary. They could not attack the national enemy, so they resolved to assault the declared antagonists of the principle, "India for the Civil Service;" and in pursuance of this plan, they actually persuaded Lord Canning to go down to the Legislative Council, suspend all the standing orders, and in the course of forty minutes to abolish the freedom of the Press!!!

Take the present members of the Government of India, the Members of Council, and the Secretaries; try their powers, analyse their abilities, and with the single exception of Mr. Edmonstone, there is not one of them whose capacity can be rated higher than that of an average lawyer's clerk; had their lot not been cast in "the pleasant places" of an exclusive service, few of them would have been able to earn an independent livelihood!

It is easy, therefore, to imagine why they should have been jealous of a Press which did not recognise their pretensions to an exclusive possession of intellect, but that such men should have subordinated Lord Canning to their views appertains to the marvellous. Lord Ellenborough would have used them to his own purposes; they have moulded Lord Canning to theirs!

With terrible anxiety do the independent Europeans wait the decision of the people of England regarding the future government of India. It is a most momentous question, fraught with all-important results for good or evil, not only to the independent Europeans, but

to the millions of native inhabitants! For the good of all, it is *essential* that the exclusive Civil Service should be abolished!

I cannot, however, conclude this part of my narrative without paying the homage which is due to those civil and military servants who have in every respect deserved well of their country. Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, and his brother Sir John Lawrence in the Punjab, have, in this crisis, not only nobly sustained their great reputation, but have risen to a height in public estimation beyond which it is impossible to ascend. Sir Henry especially has, with the smallest means at his disposal, effected the greatest marvels. With five hundred Europeans he has held the most disaffected city in Asia, and kept at bay the inhabitants of a province larger than England! Sir Hugh Massey Wheeler, at Cawnpore, has successfully defended a barrack containing two hundred Europeans against thousands of natives thirsting for their blood. Messrs. Gubbins and Lind, and Colonel Neil, at Benares, have done all that men could do in their circumstances. I mention the names of these illustrious men in this place, not with the vain hope of doing them justice here, but to show that my pen is not entirely dipped in gall—that I wish to speak impartially of all, irrespective of the service to which they belong.

At a future and not very distant occasion I hope to produce a fully detailed narrative of their deeds.

One word on the subject of Army Reform. That subject is now under the consideration of the Government of India, but as their plans must be primarily submitted to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, they will doubtless be subjected to alteration according to the expressed sentiments of the people of England. I will only say on this occasion, that the Brahmins have proved that they cannot be trusted with arms: the Mahomedans, too, have shown that they cherish in their hearts the proselyting doctrines of their religion, and that us Christians they will ever detest, and take advantage of every opportunity of destroying Europeans.

We shall therefore be compelled to adopt an entirely new system; of this, one necessary feature must be a large increase to the purely European force: this is indispensable. Then the whole of the Bengal Army—at least the regiments which have not mutinied—should be disbanded, and re-organised on a new footing: the rank of native officer should be abolished; promotion by merit directed; the pension establishment, which has failed in its purpose, should be done away with.

Those regiments which, few in number, have not mutinied or been disarmed, might be allowed to retain their arms; their numbers be reduced to 800 men, and they should always be quartered with Europeans. The practice of living in lines should be forbidden, but barracks similar to those of the European troops should be provided. To each company, in lieu of native officers, who have proved themselves either mutinous or incompetent, two steady European non-commissioned officers should be attached. They should live in the barracks with the men, though separated from them, and should keep the keys of the bells of arms.

Supposing twenty more European regiments to be added to Bengal, there might be twenty native regiments of the nature I describe. Not a Brahmin should be admitted; they should be composed chiefly of low-caste Hindoos and Sikhs. The Goorkhas should remain as they are, unmixed.

The men of the regiments thus re-formed should never be sent on escort duty; they should remain cantoned with Europeans, and should be constantly brigaded and exercised with them.

To carry on other duties, mere police duties, such as escorting treasure and commissariat stores, other regiments should be raised, under the denomination of Police Corps. To these fire-arms should not be entrusted. A short sword and an iron-bound club should be their weapons; they should be paid at a lower rate than the others, and should not be allowed to rank as soldiers.

As a preliminary measure it will be necessary, merciless as it may sound to English ears, to hunt down every mutineer. India will not be secure so long as a single man remains alive. Since I commenced this page, details have been received of the merciless slaughter of upwards of an hundred unarmed ladies—women and children flying for a place of refuge. These are our sisters and your sisters, people of England! And ought their murderers to be spared, perhaps pensioned? Yet, canvass Calcutta at this moment—inquire from civilians, merchants, and military men, and the all but universal answer will arise, that at the hands of our Government—a Government comprehending such men as Messrs. Dorin, J. P. Grant, Beadon, and Birch, there will be the same shrinking from severe punishment, the same paltering with mutineers, the same truckling to rebels, by which their measures, up to the present moment, have been fatally marked.

DII AVERTANT OMEN!

END OF PART I.